



**Testimony Supporting House Bill 4478
House Criminal Justice Committee
May 19, 2015**

Contact: Carrie McGowan
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Dear Chairman Heise and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

Michigan's Political Action Committee for Animals (Mi-PACA) is a statewide organization comprised of dedicated volunteers who work to organize and create regional voting blocs of Michigan citizens to support animal protection initiatives.

Mi-PACA supports HB 4478 because it will effectively offer additional protection for victims of domestic violence and their pets.

Currently, 28 states have recognized the benefit of including animals in personal protection orders. All too often, victims of domestic violence delay leaving an abusive situation or return to one out of fear that their pet will be harmed. Well-documented research has shown that abusive partners frequently harm, or threaten to harm companion animals as a means of gaining control over a victim or inflicting extreme emotional abuse; 71% of women surveyed who have experienced domestic violence situations have reported that their abusers harmed, threatened, or killed their pets (Ascione, Weber & Wood, 2007). It is time for Michigan to join the growing number of states that have implemented this life-saving measure.

This legislation is a pragmatic approach that will remove a significant barrier for victims of domestic violence who are seeking help and safety for themselves and their animals. Because it would decrease the occurrence of both domestic violence and animal abuse, Mi-PACA respectfully urges the Committee to support HB 4478.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions on this matter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carrie McGowan, Board of Trustees
Michigan's Political Action Committee for Animals